

REMARKS

The Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to consider the Present Application in light of the Amended Claims, and in light of the remarks which follow.

Section 112 Rejection

On page 2 of the First Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, Second Paragraph, “as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out the distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as the invention.” The Examiner further stated that “Claim 1, line 1, is unclear in that it does not express a specified function for the method.”

The Applicants have amended Claim 1 so that Lines 1 and 2 now reads:

“A method of operating a nuclear powered vehicle in orbit comprising the steps of:”

The inserted text was formerly recited in Line 3 of Claim 1, and has now been inserted in Lines 1 and 2, and deleted from Line 3. The Applicants believe that this revision overcomes the Section 112 rejection.

Objection to the Abstract

On page 2 of the First Office Action, the Examiner objected to the Abstract because it contains the text “is disclosed” in Line 1, citing MPEP Section 608.01(b). The Applicants have deleted “is disclosed” from the Abstract in accordance with the objection. The Applicants believe that this deletion overcomes this objection.

Objections to the Disclosure

On page 2 of the First Office Action, the Examiner objected to the disclosure, and stated that “the relationships of each recited US patent application, i.e., continuation, continuation-in-part, to the instant application and to each other are not set forth in the accepted manner. Moreover, in line 10, the missing serial number should be provided.”

The Applicants have revised the Section entitled

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED PENDING PATENT APPLICATIONS & CLAIMS FOR PRIORITY

by adding the appropriate relationships of the related Applications, and by providing the complete Serial Number in Line 10. The Applicants believe that these revisions overcome the objections to the disclosure.

Rejection of the Claims

The Applicants have amended the Original Claim 1 to overcome the rejection contained in the First Office Action dated 19 October 2005. The First Office Action contained a rejection of Claims 1 and 3 in accordance with Section 102(b), based on an article entitled "Nuclear Electric Propulsion of Spacecraft" by Martin (Document 2A, disclosed in Second Disclosure Statement filed on 18 July 2005).

The Applicants have amended Claim 1 to add limitations regarding the Applicants' grasping means:

1. (Amended Twice.) A method of operating a nuclear powered vehicle in orbit comprising the steps of:

~~operating a nuclear powered vehicle in orbit;~~

~~said nuclear powered vehicle including~~ providing said nuclear powered vehicle in
5 orbit with a radiation shield (20) for protecting a detachable payload (15); ~~and~~

providing said nuclear powered vehicle including with a grasping means (14)
extending outwardly therefrom at one end for docking and interacting with a
plurality of other satellites; said grasping means (14) being configured for
multiple use and for interacting with a plurality of different objects; said grasping
10 means (14) including a plurality of segments;

configuring said plurality of segments to partially surround one of said plurality of
different objects and to engage and to grasp said object without the need for any
preconfigured docking interface on said object; and

providing controlled kinetic energy; said controlled kinetic energy for interacting
15 with a plurality of other satellites.

The Applicants respectfully contend that the Martin article does not disclose, teach or suggest a grasping means that is configured for multiple use and for interacting with a wide variety of objects, and which includes a plurality of segments that are configured to engage and to grasp one of said objects.

The Applicants respectfully submit that this recitation is fully disclosed in Original Figures 1A, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 13. The Applicants have also amended the Specification to add new text on page 18 that describes the features of the grasping means that are clearly illustrated in Original Figures 1A, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 13:

“In one embodiment, which is shown best in Figures 1A, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 13, the grasping means comprises a plurality of segments, which extend outwardly away from one end of the boom. These segments are configured to partially surround or to enclose an object, and then to engage and to grasp a wide variety of satellites 15 or other objects above the surface of the Earth without the need for any preconfigured docking interface on the object which is grasped.”

The Applicants submit that the Original Specification and Drawings of the Present Application provide adequate support for the revisions contained in this First Amendment. The Applicants contend that Claim 1, as currently amended, is now patentable over the Martin article. Since Claim 3 depends on Claim 1, Claim 3 is now patentable for the same reasons.

CONCLUSION

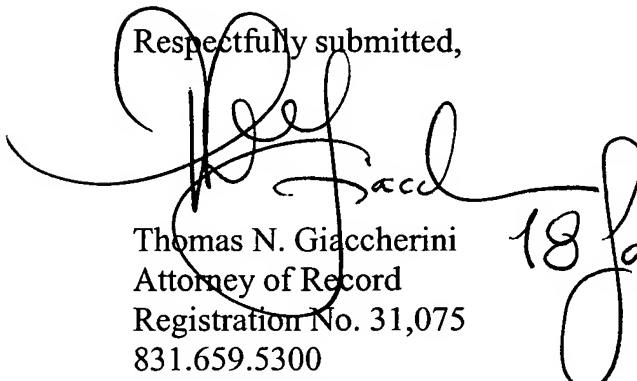
Request for Allowance of Claims

The Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments presented in this First Amendment do not contain new matter, and are fully supported by the Specification and Drawings as originally filed.

The Applicants believe that no fee is required to enter this First Amendment.

The Applicants respectfully request that the all of the Pending Claims be allowed, and this Application be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,


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18 Jan 2006.

Transmitted to the U.S. Patent Office
with a Rule 8 Certificate by First Class Mail
on 18 January 2006.